

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. *(currently amended)* A method of setting up a call between a subscriber premises and a call center, comprising:
- receiving a call set up request from a gateway responsive to the subscriber premises, said gateway being connected to the subscriber via a data network;
 - sending a an availability query from the gateway to the call center via the data network;
 - preparing a call set up instruction for setting up the call ~~between the subscriber premises and~~ initiated by the call center to the subscriber premises if an availability reply is received from the call center; and
 - estimating a time-in-queue for the call center to become available to ~~receive~~ initiate the call and preparing a call queue status message for delivery to the gateway if an unavailability reply is received before the availability reply is received from the call center.
2. *(currently amended)* The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a call path between the ~~subscriber premises and the call center~~ and the subscriber premises.
3. *(original)* The method of claim 2, wherein a network switch provides the call path in response to the call set up instruction.
4. *(original)* The method of claim 2, wherein providing a call path includes placing a call to the subscriber premises.
5. - 6. *cancelled*
7. *(previously amended)* The method of claim 1, further comprising sending the call queue status message to the gateway for delivery to the subscriber premises.
8. *(previously amended)* The method of claim 1, further comprising: receiving an agent available reply from the call center; and

preparing an updated call queue status message for delivery to the gateway.

9. *(previously amended)* The method of claim 1, further comprising preparing an updated call queue status message for delivery to the gateway after receiving the availability reply.

10. *(original)* The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber premises includes a computer for communicating with the gateway, and a telephone for communicating with the call center.

11. *(currently amended)* The method of claim 1, further comprising preparing a call connection message relating to the call being set up between the ~~subscriber premises~~ and the call center and the subscriber premises.

12. *(original)* The method of claim 11, further comprising sending the call connection message to the gateway for delivery to the subscriber premises.

13. *(currently amended)* An apparatus for setting up a call between a subscriber premises and a call center, comprising:

means for receiving a call set up request from a gateway responsive to the subscriber premises, said gateway being connected to the subscriber premises via a data network;

means for sending a query from the gateway to the call center, said gateway being connected to the call center via the data network;

means for receiving a reply at the gateway from the call center;

means for preparing a call set up instruction for setting up the call ~~between the subscriber premises and~~ initiated by the call center to the subscriber premises if an availability reply is received from the call center; and

means for estimating a time-in-queue for the call center to become available to ~~receive~~ initiate the call and means for preparing a call queue status message for delivery

to the gateway if an unavailability reply is received before the availability reply is received from the call center.

14. *(currently amended)* The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising a network switch for providing a call path between the ~~subscriber premises and the call center~~ and the subscriber premises in response to the call set up instruction.

15. *(original)* The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the network switch places a call to the subscriber premises.

16. - 17. *cancelled*

18. *(previously amended)* The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising means for sending the call queue status message to the gateway for delivery to the subscriber premises.

19. *(previously amended)* The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:
means for receiving an agent available reply from the call center, and
means for preparing an updated call queue status message for delivery to the gateway.

20. *(previously amended)* The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising means for preparing an updated call queue status message for delivery to the gateway after receiving the availability reply.

21. *(original)* The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the subscriber premises includes a computer for communicating with the gateway, and a telephone for communicating with the call center station.

22. *(currently amended)* The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising means for preparing a call connection message relating to the call being set up between the subscriber premises and the call center and the subscriber premises.

23. *(original)* The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising means for delivering the call connection message to the gateway for delivery to the subscriber premises.

24. *(original)* The method of claim 1, wherein the data network is the Internet.

25. *(original)* The method of claim 1, further comprising:
utilizing a telephone at the subscriber premises for enabling communication between a user at the subscriber premises and an available agent at the call center.

26. *(original)* The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the data network is the Internet.

27. *(original)* The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:
a telephone at the subscriber premises for enabling communication between a user at the subscriber premises and an available agent at the call center.
